

# ROBERTO CLEMENTE

Journeys Unit 1 Lesson 5

PUERTO RICO

## What makes someone a hero?

After Roberto Clemente disappeared in a plane crash off the coast of San Juan, Puerto Rico, on New Year's Eve 1972, his body was never found. United States Coast Guard rescue and recovery teams searched the Atlantic Ocean waters for several weeks. The only thing of his that was found was a single baseball sock.

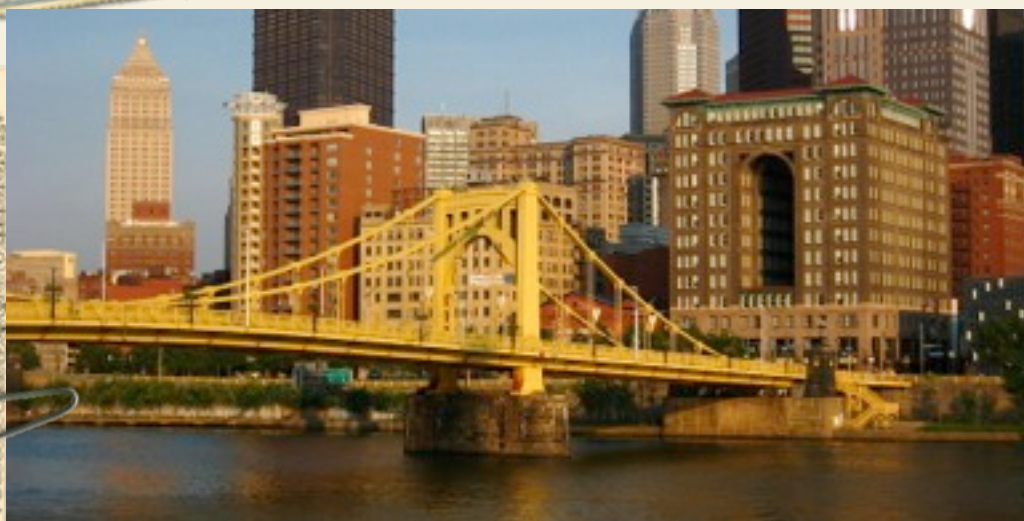
Clemente represents more than baseball. That explains why his baseball helmet is at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C., where it will appear with more than 100 objects—along with the Ruby Slippers from *The Wizard of Oz*, the original Kermit the Frog and a 150-pound piece of Plymouth Rock—in the exhibition “American Stories.”



Puerto Rican Flag



Clemente chose the number 21 for his baseball jersey because it was the number of letters in his full name.



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Clemente Statue

In addition to being put on almost 100 baseball cards, Clemente was honored in 1982 with a 20-cent stamp issued by Puerto Rico. At the 1994 All-Star game in Pittsburgh, a bronze statue of Clemente was unveiled. Pirates outfielder Orlando Merced said "Roberto Clemente means a dream to me, and to a lot of kids and people.... He has pushed me to be a better player and a better person. When they unveiled the statue, I was crying. It made me proud to be who I am and to be a Puerto Rican."

Roberto Clemente was not only a great player on the field, but he was a greater person off the field. Clemente is one of the most beloved players in baseball history. He had exactly 3000 hits in his major league career before he died in a 1972 plane crash. His plane went down while taking supplies to Nicaraguan earthquake victims. Roberto Clemente is no doubt one of the best players to have played the game of baseball and one of the greatest people.



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Roberto Clemente  
Autographed 1972  
Topps Card



ROBERTO CLEMENTE  
*Roberto Clemente Award*